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“All In” for Composition Education: Opportunities and Challenges for Pre-Service Music Teacher Curricula

John W. Richmond

Introduction

The editors of this volume have asked me to describe our pre-service teacher education program that includes a concentration in music composition education. Naturally, I am pleased and flattered to do so. The considerable journey that we have begun at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) to bring this program into being has been extremely rewarding, occasionally frustrating, and always remarkably challenging. Indeed, it remains rewarding, frustrating, and challenging today.

Readers of a book such as this will know that the traditional paths to pre-service music teacher training and certification commonly include focus on one or more of the specialties in *instrumental music* (band, orchestra, jazz ensembles, etc.), *choral/vocal music*, or *general music* (most commonly associated with the elementary school setting). Music composition has been an explicit and agreed-upon aspiration of U.S. school curricula for grades K-12 since the adoption of the National Standards for Music Education in 1994, and music composition has been a part of the deliberations of our profession for much longer than that. Nevertheless, there has been only modest progress toward the incorporation of music composition pedagogy as a focus of pre-service music teacher curricula in American colleges and universities (Reimer, 2003: 259).

A telling confirmation of this state of affairs can be inferred from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) Handbook, the document that provides the official compendium of all specialty (as contrasted with regional) accreditation standards for college and university music degree programs in the United States. In it, NASM provides explicit accreditation standards for music education degree programs leading to certification in instrumental, choral/vocal, and general music education in considerable detail (*NASM Handbook 2010-2011*, IX.L.3.c). There is no such discussion of music composition education in this section of the *Handbook*,

however, other than by way of references to (1) a minimum required level of composition/improvisation competence expected of music students enrolled in all undergraduate professional music degree programs, including degrees in music education, and (2) the requirement that music education students acquire some measure of competence in arranging music for K-12 student music ensembles. Let us consider these two standards in order.

First, here is the language of the NASM standard regarding the composition/improvisation competencies required of all music students in all undergraduate professional music degree programs.

Composition/Improvisation. Students must acquire a rudimentary capacity to create original or derivative music. It is the prerogative of each institution to develop specific requirements regarding written, electronic, or improvisatory forms and methods. These may include but are not limited to the creation of original compositions or improvisations, variations or improvisations on existing materials, experimentation with various sound sources, the imitation of musical styles, and manipulating the common elements in non-traditional ways. Institutional requirements should help students gain a basic understanding of how to work freely and cogently with musical materials in various composition-based activities, particularly those most associated with the major field. (*NASM Handbook 2010-2011*, VIII.B.3)

The reader will notice here that the focus of this standard is on the expected competence of the music student him- or herself to learn to compose or improvise. There is no reference whatever to learning how to teach others to compose.

The current NASM standard regarding arranging skills for pre-service music education students reads as follows:

Arranging. The prospective music teacher must be able to arrange and adapt music from a variety of sources to meet the needs and ability levels of individuals, school performing groups, and in classroom situations. (*NASM Handbook 2010-2011*, IX.L.3.b[2])

Again, the focus is on the competence of the music education student in learning how to arrange music so that K-12 students can perform it. There is nothing about composition pedagogy in this standard. The only other mention of music composition in the music education section of the *NASM Handbook* simply states that “institutions should provide opportunities for advanced undergraduate study in such areas as conducting, composition, and analysis” (*NASM Handbook 2010-2011*, IX.L.3.e[5]). For readers not sensitized to the nuances of accreditation language and policy, the telling word in this last quoted standard is the word “should.” Because the standard reads that the institution “should provide,” rather than “must provide,” member institutions are under no obligation to provide “... advanced ... study in ... conducting, composition, and analysis.” They simply are admonished by NASM that this is something member institutions should do.

The reader should not infer, nor am I implying here, that NASM is somehow averse to music teacher education programs that embrace composition education as a legitimate ambition and focus of teacher training programs. Rather, the NASM accreditation standards reflect a consensus position of the member institutions about best practices in music teaching and learning in the United States. These standards guide each member institution in the ongoing obligation of fashioning music curricula and marshaling institutional resources so as to bring these standards of best practice to life in the contexts and circumstances of each member institution.

So if NASM is *not* averse to composition pedagogy curricula situated in pre-service music education programs, how do we explain the association's silence on this question? I believe it likely is because the NASM membership in the aggregate has not yet found a reason to articulate standards about pre-service curricula in composition pedagogy for music education students. This curricular focus simply has not yet grown enough in size and reach across U.S. higher education to trigger an accreditation action for the Association. The goal of this chapter is to share one university's experience in addressing this meager state of affairs by attempting to move composition pedagogy into the pre-service music education curriculum.

The balance of this narrative will address first the set of practical questions that so often dominate discussions I have had about this curriculum when I have been asked to speak about it at professional meetings across the United States and abroad. These practical questions include:

1. Who should learn to teach music composition to children in K-12 settings?
2. Who should teach composition pedagogy to pre-service music education students?
3. Where can university students be placed for practicum experiences in K-12 settings?
4. What costs are attached to a composition pedagogy curriculum and how can university music schools and departments shoulder such costs, especially in times of diminishing funding and resources?
5. What role might university music schools play in working with local districts to create employment opportunities for music composition pedagogy specialists?
6. Are there other courses implied in such a curriculum besides a methods class in composition pedagogy and its companion practicum?

Obviously, each of these questions could occupy a chapter (or book) of its own. My answers will have to be far shorter here, but I hope they will give a general sense of the kinds of concerns that we have tried to manage, along with a few words about how we have tried to manage them. I then will close with a brief reflection on certain philosophical matters that have informed much of our work here and that speak to a more ambitious and inclusive agenda for music education in American schools in the twenty-first century.

Practical Considerations and Questions

Who Should Learn to Teach Music Composition to Children in K-12 Settings?

While some institutions often find this initial question to be a vexing one, we had the good fortune to come to a rather easy consensus about this—all of our music education students should learn to teach music composition. This is not the complete answer to this question, by the way, but it has been a vitally important part of the answer—one on which so much of the balance of these curricular reforms rests. Our music education faculty decided years ago that the only certification program in music that we would offer our students is a comprehensive one. Based on the traditional curriculum of pre-service teacher training, this meant a curriculum for every music education student that led to comprehensive music teacher certification—K-12 instrumental, choral/vocal, and general music education.

When the opportunity then arose to consider the question of composition pedagogy for our music education students, this meant our faculty had the challenge of finding space in the curriculum to which we could *add* this important fourth dimension for our students. More about the details of this challenging exercise of finding curricular space will follow below. Suffice it to say here that our faculty members are committed to the idea that pre-service music teacher training should be broad and inclusive. There are several justifications to support this approach in context. First, our alumni have reported that this broad preparation and comprehensive certification provided them with an important philosophical perspective of the music education profession. Understanding how all of the parts of the K-12 music education enterprise work in symbiosis provided a helpful understanding of the role any given music teacher plays in the larger scheme of things. Second, our faculty believes that earning a K-12 certification in music provides our alumni with a competitive advantage in pursuit of employment in K-12 settings that they otherwise might not enjoy. Third, our faculty has observed that first-year students, who arrived imagining that they would occupy one focus area of the music education profession, soon found themselves led in very different directions as a consequence of the breadth of the curricular exposure they experienced in the undergraduate program. Offering this comprehensive curriculum affords students the opportunity to move among the various music education specialties easily as their professional interests mature without prolonging the time and credits to the completion of degree requirements unnecessarily. Finally, the faculty has found it important to consider the demographics of Nebraska, the state that supports UNL in the work we do. A word of explanation is in order here.

Nebraska is a very large state by geography (ranked 16th in the country by area) and a very small state by population (ranked 38th in the country with a population of just over 1.8 million). Of that 1.8 million Nebraskans, over 860,000 live in metropolitan Omaha and over 300,000 live in metropolitan Lincoln (U.S. Census Bureau, State and County Quick Facts 2010). This means, of

course, that nearly two-thirds of the entire population of the state is clustered in the east, leaving the balance of the population scattered across a large landmass covering two time zones.

The provision of music education programs in the public and private schools in these two urban centers resembles in many ways the typical organization of music instruction in K.-12 schools across the country. Choral specialists direct choirs. Band specialists direct bands. Orchestra specialists direct orchestras. General music specialists work in the elementary schools. Persons moving from other urban centers to these two Nebraska urban communities would discover a system of schools that would seem familiar.

What has this to do with our devotion to a comprehensive approach to pre-service education and teacher certification in music education? The population in much of the rest of our state is sparse. Music teachers hired by the schools of rural Nebraska often are the only music educators in a given school or set of schools. They are the sole provider of the full range of music instruction in the community, including general, choral/vocal music, and instrumental music education. In fact, it is still possible to find one-room schoolhouses in our state. As a consequence, Nebraska needs broadly prepared music educators who are able to deliver the full range of music instruction at all grade levels and focus areas in these rural settings.

Thus, the pre-service, undergraduate music education curriculum must provide instruction for all music education students in the various families of instruments, in voice pedagogy, in general methods, choral methods, and instrumental methods. Music education students must experience placements in school-situated practicums in these various kinds of teaching settings and curricula, and must receive formative and summative assessments of their effectiveness as music educators. The music education students' sense of personal identity may align more strongly with one of these traditional specialties than another, but our faculty believes that all music education students must receive the full array of courses in support of this broad orientation to music teaching and learning. Our alumni may very well be called upon, especially in the more rural areas in our state, to teach general music to elementary students in the morning and direct the high school marching band in the afternoon, for example.

It is for these reasons that, for us, the development of a curriculum focus on composition pedagogy in the pre-service curriculum required its *addition* to the curriculum rather than composition pedagogy as a replacement for one or more of the traditional curricular foci. Composition pedagogy needed to be a fourth major focus of our comprehensive approach, a full and equal partner to instrumental, choral/vocal, and general music education. So if these traditional foci required major methods courses devoted to their respective content areas that every pre-service music education student would be required to take, then composition pedagogy would need its own required methods course, as well. If these traditional foci required practicums in the schools, then composition pedagogy would, as well (and this requirement of a composition practicum proved to be a formidable challenge, given the dearth of music composition teaching and learning being

delivered formally in area K-12 schools). The rationale that supported a comprehensive approach to pre-service music teacher training (philosophical perspective of the profession, employment competitiveness, identity shift of undergraduate students from one traditional curriculum focus to another, the needs of schools in rural Nebraska, etc.) all supported the approach of *adding* composition pedagogy as a fourth full partner to our pre-service music education curriculum.

I mentioned earlier that the decision to embrace composition pedagogy for all of our music education students was an important part of the answer to the question of who should learn to teach music composition to K-12 children, but that there was more to our answer than this. The other part of the answer for us was that we believed that just as some students naturally gravitate to one of the three traditional music education specialties of instrumental, choral/vocal, or general music education, so there likely would emerge students who would naturally gravitate to music composition pedagogy. Some students surely would identify with this newly affirmed and exciting specialty in our profession.

If this were the case, then this particular kind of pre-service music education student likely would have a stronger interest in composition, likely would have some experience composing original works during their high school experience, and may have been fortunate to have been taught by a music educator who encouraged composition in the classroom or rehearsal. This student's interests would not be nourished sufficiently by a single methods class in composition pedagogy any more than a music education student with a choral interest would be nourished sufficiently by a single methods course in choral pedagogy. A choral student would expect voice lessons, voice recitals, choral ensembles, conducting instruction, musical theatre experiences, diction instruction, etc., in order to acquire the depth of sophistication and range of expertise he or she surely would want to apply day to day as an accomplished choral/vocal educator in the schools.

So too, then, the composition education student would expect composition lessons, instruction in orchestration/arranging, instruction in composition technology (notation software, sequencing programs, sampling programs, MIDI, etc.), composition recitals, and instruction in music composition for mixed media. In short, pre-service music education students who identified with composition rather than band or choir, etc., would expect a set of experiences that equipped them as composers in a manner comparable to their performance- and general-music counterparts. For this to happen, our curriculum had to support music education students whose applied major would be composition. And for this to happen, the composition faculty would have to be prepared to accept into the composition studios music education students in a fashion that parallels music education students in the other applied studios.

Once again, whereas this would be a source of great anxiety in many university music schools, this was not a contentious issue for us. The composition faculty seemed to recognize that music education students are often the most accomplished performers in the various performance studios. Might it not also be the case that music education students might prove to be among the most promising com-

posers? Further, the composition faculty speculated that the music education program might afford another kind of employment outlet for young composers—an outlet too often otherwise foreclosed to them. Might the career prospects of composition music educators, able to pursue employment in K-12 schools (with salary, health benefits, retirement, etc.), then attract a new cohort of composers to our institution at a time when student recruiting is becoming ever more challenging? Our faculty believed the answer to these questions was yes.

Finally, and almost ironically, several long-serving music faculty remembered that there had been in UNL's history a few music education students who had taken composition lessons as a part of their degree programs in the past. These students had done well in the composition studio, had continued to compose beyond their degree, and had found ways to teach composition, albeit in a rather impromptu fashion, in the schools where they had found employment.

To summarize, we decided to expand the tripartite pre-service curriculum of instrument, choral/vocal, and general music education for all music education students to include an additional fourth focus in our comprehensive program of teacher preparation—composition pedagogy. All music education students would receive a methods course in music composition pedagogy, coupled with appropriate opportunities for micro-teaching experiences with K-12 students. In addition, UNL would recruit a subset of music education students whose primary interest (and even musical identity) was composition. These students would have composition as their primary applied area. They would study orchestration/arranging, would study relevant music technology, would present composition recitals, and would, in a sense, become composition pedagogy specialists. The expressed plan for this cohort of composition-intensive students was to begin the process of cultivating a cohort of composition pedagogy specialists in the K-12 profession, much as we have in the other more traditional focus areas of music education. The reader may be interested to note that at this writing, roughly a quarter of the undergraduate composition studio enrollment is made up of these music education composition students.

Who Should Teach Composition Pedagogy to Pre-Service Music Education Students?

Should it be music education professors with an enthusiasm for composition teaching? Should it be composition professors with an interest in (or in some cases tolerance for) music education students and young composers in K-12 schools? Should it be public school teachers who are open to collaboration with both university specialists?

Because we have on our faculty a music education professor with a long-standing interest in questions about composition pedagogy through a music education lens (Moore, 1986; and Moore, 2003), our first and ultimate choice was to turn to

him for the design and delivery of our methods course in composition pedagogy. However, as discussions among our faculty unfolded in both formal and informal settings, other music education professors expressed interest in being a part of this course design and other courses that seemed promising (a course in song-writing, for example).

We also had to decide about the role and scope of music technology in music composition pedagogy first for music education pre-service undergraduates and second for the K-12 students with whom our undergraduates would work. Again, our lead professor in this area has considerable expertise and years of experience in music technology, so an instructional design supported by and infused with music technology made sense for us (Moore, 1994).

Finally, our music education faculty considered the possibility of organizing the methods course in a team-taught manner involving both music education professors and composition professors. While we have not implemented this team-teaching approach yet, it remains an interesting and compelling option that all parties agree may have important potential. This is becoming more viable in one sense, now that several music education majors are students in the composition studios. Music education students are now known and respected by our composition faculty. Our composition faculty members quite naturally are becoming invested in the success of these young composition music educators.

Where Can Students Be Placed for Practicum Experiences in K-12 Settings?

Given the dearth of music composition teaching and learning in American schools, and also in Lincoln, Nebraska schools, the question of where to place pre-service university students for practicum experiences with K-12 students remains an ongoing challenge. Nevertheless, our faculty embraced the wisdom of Confucius that “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” and looked for a single public-school partner with whom to collaborate in providing a site from which to launch our composition pedagogy initiative. Lincoln North Star High School, one of six public high schools in the Lincoln Public Schools, proved to be that school and their music teacher proved to be that dedicated collaborator, who was encouraged by a supportive high school administration and district music supervisor. A number of important lessons have emerged from our early work together.

First, university music education students, as well as the high school students they serve in these composition practicums, are, for the most part, novice composers. Both groups are on a journey to acquire “a rudimentary capacity to create original or derivative music” (*NASM Handbook 2010-2011*, VIII.B.3). University students and high school students find themselves to be co-learners about the art and techniques of music composition. Second, our decision to employ composition technology means that sharing work and the “rendering” of music compositions for sharing and feedback in a classroom or on the web are at once easier and more re-

liable. Third, composition by way of technology allows the professor, the university students, and the high school students to archive their work for a variety of purposes in the future (keeping revisions of compositional products, maintaining research on compositional products and processes, sharing compositions with family and friends, sharing student works with other faculty in support of in-service education, etc.).

Our next goal is to grow the number of collaborative sites from this one high school program to additional high schools, and to add middle schools and elementary schools, so that our university students can have the opportunity to work with a broader range of ages, interests, and backgrounds. We expect to be able to do this with greater ease as more of our music education alumni, all of whom now are receiving instruction in composition pedagogy, are placed in this school district and others in the region after they graduate—alumni who understand the value of music composition in the curriculum for their students and who are able to partner with us to expand and enrich composition activities for students.

Finances

What costs are attached to a composition pedagogy initiative and how can university music schools and departments shoulder such costs in times of diminishing funding and resources? In our experience thus far, costs can be calculated in terms of technology, time, space, and political capital. I will provide a few words of annotation about each of these. Please understand that each of these matters could fill a book. I wish to avoid burdening this narrative needlessly. Suffice it to say that an important aspect of this planning process requires careful budgeting of the resources necessary to pursue this initiative successfully.

The resources needed to support this initiative fall into the following categories:

- Technology—this financial cost may be large or small, depending upon the university music school's decision to employ technology robustly or not in the service of composition pedagogy and also depending upon the music school's ongoing investments in such things. If, for example, the institution already maintains a music-enabled computer lab with suitable composition and sequencing workstations, there may be no additional money needed to utilize this resource in support of a composition pedagogy curriculum. If the K-12 schools at which the composition pedagogy practicums are housed likewise have computer labs that are capable of music computing, then the new resources needed for this aspect of the curriculum may be relatively small (software and a few music-peripheral devices).

As an aside, the management of these financial costs appears to be shifting now as some universities are undergoing a change of philosophy regarding the provision of open-use computer labs of all kinds. In short,

universities are phasing them out (Terris, 2009). So many students are arriving on college campuses with smart phones and laptops in hand that the open-use, general-purpose labs are seen as no longer needed. Some universities are taking the additional step of requiring incoming students either to arrive on campus with a specific computer configured with specific software for the program of study into which they are matriculating, or the institution simply is selling them the required hardware and software through the university bookstore. Finally, grant monies to support the innovative use of instructional technology remain a viable way to leverage new resources in support of these kinds of initiatives. As an example, in 2010 alone, our music education faculty secured more than \$100,000 to fund music technology and music composition pedagogy efforts.

- Time—the time required to launch a fourth focus in pre-service music teacher training is, at least in our experience, considerable and, unlike the technology, is a *net* cost. Whereas one might see the additional financial costs of the technology required for a composition pedagogy program to be minimal, inasmuch as money already is being invested in music technology that can be conscripted in the service of this additional curricular task, the time needed to plan and put into action a new curriculum represents a time commitment that does not overlap other time investments in curriculum planning, especially when composition is not replacing another of the more traditional music education program foci. Here are a few examples of the time investments an initiative like this will require:
 - The music education faculty will need time to decide *if*, and then *how*, music composition pedagogy will become a part of the pre-service experience. The faculty will want to review the professional literature on composition pedagogy, schedule formal meetings to discuss issues and questions, and engage in lots of informal conversations as means of moving toward a consensus position.
 - The music education faculty will need time to identify and enlist possible partners among the public schools in the region so that practicum sites can be prepared.
 - The music education faculty and the composition faculty will need time to discuss, and then come to agreement about, the role, if any, that the composition faculty will play in the education of the pre-service music education students.
 - The music education faculty will need to brief their institutional administration (chair, dean, or director) to explain what they wish to do and enlist support. They also likely will need to seek curricular approvals through the normal processes of the institution (departmental and college curriculum committees, etc.). The time required to accomplish this will expand in proportion to the ambitions of the

proposal—the simple adding of an elective composition- pedagogy workshop in the summer will be relatively straightforward, while a major adjustment to the music education pre-service curriculum will take more time for planning and approvals.

- Space—the costs in terms of space have both a literal and a metaphorical dimension in these discussions. When speaking literally, the costs of space refer to the possible need for a classroom, lab, or other facility in which composition instruction can take place as elegantly as possible. If, for example, the faculty wishes to deliver a course on composition pedagogy in the music school's computer lab, the music education faculty must determine if the facility is suitably equipped to support the curriculum as conceived. The school administration then must determine if the lab space is available at a time when the new course or courses can be delivered and the students would have time in their daily schedules to take them.

The metaphorical meaning of space refers to the pressures being felt across higher education to deliver degrees in a prescribed maximum number of quarter- or semester-hours. Music education curricula tend to be very congested, with many required courses and few if any electives. If the faculty decides, as UNL did, to add a fourth focus area in the pre-service music education curriculum, they must determine if it possible to do so without offending these credit hour limits—limits sometimes required by state statute. At UNL, the music education faculty decided to make all credit hour adjustments *within* the music education curriculum itself. This approach then “liberated” three semester hours in the existing curriculum, two of which then were reinvested in the fourth composition methods course. This approach, in effect, added the desired fourth course while concurrently generating a net reduction in hours to degree.

- Political capital—in Nebraska, music education certification is available for the three traditional focus areas. So long as the curriculum attends to those three music education foci, certification is not implicated adversely by the addition of this fourth focus on composition. This proved to be the case regarding our accreditation with NASM, as well. We made this innovative program and its virtues conspicuous to our accreditation visitation team. In that it added to the curriculum and exceeded NASM standards, it was not a concern in our reaccreditation application.

However, not all states have policies that permit this kind of flexibility. Music education professors eager to explore this approach in their own institutions will be wise to sort through the certification and accreditation implications. Even in those states that direct music education students to seek a single certification in only one specialty, I suspect it will be possible to blend a traditional focus (general music, for example) with composition pedagogy and thereby soften, if not eliminate, political exposure.

Transitioning from University to Employment

What role might university music schools play in working with local districts to create employment opportunities for music composition pedagogy specialists? With the exception of fine arts magnet schools, it is difficult to name any K-12 schools in the United States that routinely employ music educators with a focus on composition teaching—colleagues who teach children how to compose music as their full-time teaching assignment. Because this is so, it seems hard to know where and how to begin to build such programs. Professionals in the other areas of music education know that sustained, rigorous study of music requires a kind of feeder system. Bennett Reimer, a long-time champion of composition education in the schools, reminds us of how complex composition education is and should be, but does not really get at this very tough question of how to start (Reimer, 2003). How might a courageous school board and visionary set of school principals launch a composition program and keep a music composition educator fully engaged throughout the school day and school year?

Rest assured that I have no delivered wisdom and only few hunches about all of this. I do think that, of the many approaches I have considered and discussed with colleagues, the model that seems most promising to me is that of the itinerant music teacher, serving a number of schools each day. This way of teaching music has enjoyed great success for string educators over the years and I suspect it could be used with good effect for composition education, too (see Daniel Deutsch's chapter in this book for a helpful example of this composer-educator-as-itinerant-teacher approach).

Under such an approach, a single composition education specialist could be hired full-time to teach a few hours each day in an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school. In effect, a school district could hire a single composition education specialist and launch a composition program in which this one teacher cultivates her own "feeder system." As music composition "catches on," the demand for multiple sections of the several levels of music composition teaching may recommend the augmenting of that faculty. We have begun these discussions with our local district music supervisor. We have not put forward a proposal to the school board yet, but we have had some lively talks about how this might work and what the challenges would be given our local context at this time.

Course Offerings

Are there other courses implied in such a curriculum besides a methods class in composition pedagogy and its companion practicum? The short answer to this question is yes. Taking the advice of such national leaders as John Kratus from Michigan State University and Peter Webster from Northwestern University, we decided to offer some trial elective courses in music songwriting for our music ed-

ucation students, both during the regular school year for our pre-service undergraduates and also during the summer for our in-service graduate students. Early feedback from our students has been very encouraging. We also offered a new course on vernacular performance pedagogy for our pre-service music education students. In support of this effort, our school purchased two full sets of rock-band instruments so that our music education students could learn about how to form and rehearse rock bands with students in schools. The school produced a student recital of these student “lab” rock bands during the school day at a time in the schedule when the entire student body could attend. The students performed cover tunes and original songs as required elements in this end-of-term concert. Our music education faculty went so far as to secure smoke machines and light trees in order to provide an authentic context for the performances of our teacher/performer/composer *vernacularists*.

Some members of the music education faculty since have incorporated questions about composition pedagogy, vernacular music, and related questions into their own research agenda, thereby nurturing the synergies of teaching and research that institutions such as ours should have as hallmarks of their professional enterprises (Bazan, 2009; Bazan, 2011; Woody, 2007; Woody & Lehmann, 2010). Other attempts by our faculty to share this work have included a public performance on campus in which the music education faculty organized themselves into a rock band and performed “cover tunes,” thereby modeling the very sorts of creative engagements our pre-service students and their students are seeking to cultivate in music teaching and learning in our region.

Composition Pedagogy and Pre-Service Music Education Curriculum—Looking Ahead

This chapter has been an attempt to look at the structural and institutional challenges involved in a decision to infuse composition pedagogy into the pre-service music education curriculum at our university as a way to say to the profession that, at least in our experience, it can be done. This chapter has not been an effort to summarize best ways to teach composition to children and adolescents. I have made no attempt to synthesize the important research literature that continues to emerge from so many distinguished and devoted scholars who are examining these important questions every day. Our own modest progress at UNL owes much to the richness of their work, much of which is presented in chapters of this book and elsewhere (Hickey, 2003; Kaschub & Smith, 2009; Webster & Williams, 2006). This chapter also is an invitation, of sorts, for music education faculty at other institutions to explore ways that they could join us in giving systematic attention to composition education instruction for pre-service music educators. There are a number of reasons, both philosophical and sociological, why I think it is now time to move aggressively to do so.

First, it remains true today as it has for decades that U.S. students elect to take the music instruction we offer in schools less and less the longer they are enrolled in school. This is not, however, because children and adolescents become less and less interested in music over time. Rather, it is because the excellent curriculum we provide in orchestras, bands, and choral music is deeply interesting and compelling to some, but not most, of America's young people. This reality also is born out in our culture well beyond the borders of the schoolhouse. In a paper I presented to the Mayday Conference on Music Education and Ethics, I explored at some length the "disconnects" between the music we teach and the music our culture consumes. I wondered, with my esteemed colleagues at that professional meeting, about questions of cultural relevance and resource constriction as we endeavor to chart a strategic future for university music schools (Richmond, 2010). Recent reports document that the classical music of the European tradition and concert jazz make up less than 5 percent of the music consumed by our culture (CD sales, music downloads, concert tickets, etc.) (Midgette, 2010). At this writing, and unimaginable as this would have been to ponder even a decade ago, the Philadelphia Orchestra—one of America's "big five" professional orchestras—is seeking protection from its creditors in bankruptcy court (Yu, 2011).

The reader must not interpret these remarks as a condemnation of ensemble education. This is a story of enormous success and a real source of pride in the history of American music education. As a choral educator myself, I have no desire to reduce or minimize the importance of ensemble education in our schools. From all appearances, roughly 20 percent of American high school students will continue to be interested in ensemble education as they have been for more than 150 years.

Rather, it is a simple acknowledgement that American adolescents are engaging in music composition, vernacular music performance, song arranging, and digital media at impressively high numbers and at high levels, but they are doing so without the help of the portion of the American music education community employed in K-12 schools. These students are teaching themselves, they are seeking instruction from YouTube videos, they are seeking out each other as peer tutors, but they are not getting much systematic help from us (Green, 2002). But they could. And they should. The musical traditions to which these young composers are situated are nearly all vernacular and driven by commercial influences. But they need not be. Were the music education to respond to students' composition interests, surely the profession could introduce students to so many more of the world's music composition traditions than are possible when unbridled commercialism is the only influence to which students are exposed.

Finally, one of the most compelling features about music composition as a vehicle for music teaching and learning is the clear invitation such pedagogy provides for musical decision-making by students. While it is true that ensemble education has matured greatly in recent years, it also remains true that musical decision-making in ensemble settings is the province of the teacher more often than it is the student. In fact, how can school bands, orchestras, choirs, and jazz groups of any size

function at all and not descend into chaos unless the conductor/educator is bringing about musical consensus and, for lack of a better word, *ensemble*?

Independent musical decision-making may be the most lofty aspiration music educators can have for their students. Surely we desire as a music education profession to see our students outgrow us—to know that they are capable of making informed, thoughtful, compelling musical choices. It is hard for me to imagine any kind of musical education that encourages music decision-making more than music composition. It is likewise difficult to imagine a time in our history when we have been better positioned than today, in terms of a robust research literature, a powerful instructional technology, and a clear understanding of the desire students have to participate in these creative musical engagements.

I invite the profession to consider ways, appropriate to the local contexts and constraints in which teacher-training programs may find themselves, to embrace the opportunities to equip pre-service music educators to become composer educators, and to expand the agenda of music education in the schools. Our children will nourish as these important learning opportunities expand.

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